

10 Year Review of the Restaurant Grading Program

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Ensuring Restaurant Hygiene – Why Is it Important?

- #1 Concern = Food-Borne Illness
 - National estimates: 5000 deaths, and 325,000 hospitalizations a year (Mead, et al., 1999)
 - CDC study indicates that 50% of FBI in 1993-1997 were associated with restaurants and retail food facilities (CDC, 2000)
 - People are eating at restaurants more often (CSPI, 2003)



Changes Implemented With New Grading Program in 1998

- Changes to how inspections were conducted:
 - Established scoring criteria (100 point scale)
 - Creation of risk-based inspection schedule so higher risk facilities receive more inspections
 - Established inspector rotation schedule to preserve program integrity
- Changes to how inspection results were shared:
 - Established letter grading
 - Increase public access to reports (online and on-site)



Changes Implemented With New Grading Program in 1998

- Improved industry knowledge of safe food handling practices by establishing Certified Food Handler training requirement
- Established new hotline for reporting health and safety threats
- Trained all relevant staff to ensure proper program implementation



Changes Made to the Grading Program Along the Way

- Establishment of Owner-Initiated Inspections (OIs)
 - Provides owners with time to address critical issues found in initial inspection and improve the facility's condition
 - Owner can request OI within 3 days of initial inspection, OI is within 10 days of request, then Department-initiated inspection is within next 60 days
- Creation of Compliance Assistance Group
 - Ombudsman resolved disputes between industry & EHS
 - Consultation and Technical Services conducts educational outreach to industry in a variety of languages

Current Program Overview

- Inspections conducted in FY '06-'07
 - 113,682 total inspections of restaurants, retail markets, & food processors
 - 61,811 (54%) routine inspections
 - 51,871 (46%) follow-up/compliance and complaint inspections
 - 1,067 (1.7%) inspections resulted in closures
- Current staffing levels
 - 227 budgeted positions for inspectors, 33 currently vacant
- Facilities inspected
 - 37,880 restaurants, retail markets, & food processors are inspected each year
 - Over 99.5% of these facilities are in areas that have adopted the letter grading ordinance

Program Results – Improved Scores/Grades

Reductions in Lowest Grades Over 10 Years

Year	Restaurant “C” Grades (score of 70-79)	Restaurant Grades Below “C” (score below 70)
1997 – 98 (6 month period)	17.6%	11.7%
2006-07	1.8%	0.2%
Percent change	89.8% reduction	98.3% reduction

Program Results – Reduced Illness

- Several studies have found association between low food facility inspection scores and food-borne outbreaks
- Departmental study (Simon, et al., 2005)
 - Compared food-borne illness hospitalization rates in LA County and rest of CA
 - Found 13% reduction in LA not found in rest of CA
- Independent study (Jin and Leslie, 2003)
 - Found a 20% reduction in food-borne illness hospitalization rates in LA County after grading program was introduced

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Program Results – Public Values the Program

- 2001 survey found that 91% of respondents liked the grading program
- 2005 LA Health Survey found that 89% of respondents thought the program has been effective in assuring food safety
- Independent study in 2003 found an economic incentive for high grades (Jin and Leslie, 2003)
 - “A” restaurants saw 5% increase in revenue after grading program was established
 - “B” restaurants saw only 0.7% revenue increase

Program Recognition

- The State has modeled our program:
 - Now requires all counties to use risk-based inspection forms
 - Now has a Food Handler Certification requirement as well
 - Now mandates public disclosure of inspections results on-site and online too
- Other agencies around the world are interested in modeling our program
- The program has received numerous awards from community, industry, and governmental agencies over the years

Looking Forward to the Next 10 Years

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH GRADE	A
THIS ESTABLISHMENT RECEIVED A SCORE OF 90-100% AT THE TIME OF INSPECTION	
PENALTY FOR REMOVAL, PROPERTY OF THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES	

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